

1 Samuel 16:1-3 - Thursday, March 6th, 2014

- For tonight's study, we're only going to take the first three verses because they answer two very important questions for us as Christians.
- The first question we will have answered is, how we as Christians can protect our hearts from bitterness towards those who have hurt us.
- The second question we'll have answered is, does there ever come a time when withholding certain information is prudent and not deceit.

- So, by way of introduction, last week Samuel left Saul at the end of the chapter where we're told he'd never see him again until his death.
- What's interesting about this is that in spite of Samuel being only about ten miles away from Saul, he would never speak with him again.
- The reason I point this out is because one would think Samuel was so bitter towards Saul, that he wouldn't want anything to do with him.

- However, as we're about to see right out of the shoot in verse one, Samuel is heart broken and weeping for Saul, not bitter towards Saul.

(1) Now the LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. For I have provided Myself a king among his sons."

- Personally, I have to confess that Samuel's heart for Saul and even Israel is so astounding, that it's matched only by how it's so convicting.
- Here's why, the Holy Spirit convicted my heart vis-à-vis Samuel's heart such that, I'm more apt to hold a grudge against those who hurt me.
- Moreover, I'm even more prone to harbor bitterness in my heart towards those who hurt my children and bride or His children and His bride.

- It's for this reason that I'm convicted by Samuel's heart towards not only Saul, but also the children of Israel who rejected him and his sons.
- If you really think about it, Samuel could have arguably had at least a righteous anger towards the children of Israel for demanding a king.
- Furthermore, he could have even had a sanctified gloating of sorts when the Israelites realized demanding this king came at their own peril.

- All of this begs the question of why it is, and how it is, that Samuel was able to protect his heart from the bitterness that defiles one's heart.

Hebrews 12:15 NIV See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

- Perhaps you'll indulge me for just a bit as I attempt to answer the question that's on the table before us, concerning Samuel mourning Saul.
- In order to do that, we need to rewind the video of Samuel's life back to when his mother Hannah had dedicated him to the Lord with Eli.
- The reason being is that as a very young child, he witnessed unspeakable ungodliness by way of the wickedness of the two sons of Eli.

- If that weren't bad enough, he also witnessed how that Eli does absolutely nothing about their sexual immorality and financial impropriety.
- One would think that just their hypocrisy alone would have been enough to stumble a young Samuel, but somehow, he remains unshaken.
- Even when consider that in addition to Eli's hypocrisy, and his sons immorality, Samuel also lived through the children of Israel's rebellion.

- It's important to keep in mind that Samuel would grow up in, and live through the judgment of God upon the children of Israel because of it.
- Then, as heartbreaking as this must have been, Samuel would have two sons who would also turn away and not walk in the Lord's ways.
- While we don't know for certain why they turned away from the Lord, one could speculate they may have been stumbled by what they saw.

- To Samuel's credit, he does the right thing, which is often times, also, the hard thing as well, and removes his two sons from their positions.
- This after he's confronted concerning his sons, and rejected concerning his leadership of Israel, which is when they demand to have a king.
- I suppose you could say Samuel would remain faithful, and as such, he would also finish well in spite of only witnessing the exact opposite.

- Now, with that understanding, let's fast forward to First Samuel chapter fifteen and in so doing, attempt to answer the question on the table.
- Namely, what was Samuel's secret? I submit it was chiefly that Samuel focused not on what was done against him, but God's call on him.
- Let me explain, God called Samuel before God formed him in the barrenness of his mother's womb, and God's calling is God's enabling.

- In other words, God will package the enabling with His calling so as to create an environment that's conducive to us heeding His calling.
- The problem is that when we turn away from the Lord, and or no longer rely on the Lord, we sever the power source of strength in the Lord.
- Then, when we do that we are operating in the strength of our own flesh, which comes by way of our pride insisting that we do it in our way.

- Then, when we do it in our way, and by our self, we in effect tie the hands of the Lord's strength with the ropes of our own obstinate pride.
- At the risk of an oversimplification, I would suggest that this is exactly what Saul had done, in that he had become so full of pride and self.
- And, it's evidenced by how he begs Samuel to go back with him so he can be seen by the Israelites as worshipping God and saving face.

- By way of a contrast to Saul's pride, you have Samuel's humility, which is why he cared only about pleasing God instead of pleasing man.
- Actually, this is a litmus test of sorts in the sense that man pleasers are so full of themselves their pride is hurt by what others do to them.
- Whereas conversely, the God pleasers are so full of the Holy Spirit in their humility, there's no pride to be hurt by what others do to them.

- You'll forgive me in advance for the morbidity of this quote, but it's been said that dead men don't flinch when they're stabbed in the back.
- Perhaps better said, when we daily pick up our cross and die to our self, there won't be any self to hurt, and as such, no pride to wound.
- This is why Samuel mourns the fall of Saul and not the wounds of self; he laments Saul's sinfulness, he's not gloating in his blamelessness.

Charles Spurgeon - "It was both natural and right that the prophet should lament Saul's sin, but he must not repine at the Lord's punishment of him, but rather bestir himself to be God's messenger to the better king who would one day prove a great blessing to Israel. We must lament that any should so sin as to incur God's anger, but at his judgments upon them we must not rebel, for the Judge of all the earth must do right. When the wicked are cast into hell, the saints in heaven do not murmur out of pity to the offenders' but, in obedient sympathy with the most Holy God, they adore with reverential awe."

- Before we move speedily on to verse two, there's something else we need to take note of here in verse one as it relates to what God says.
- More specifically, God says to Samuel, it's time to stop mourning, and get moving onto the next thing that I am now preparing for you to do.
- Here's what I'm thinking, when we mourn a loss, whether it be something or even someone, God is preparing a much better replacement.

- Such is the case with Saul. It's as if God is saying, yes, you're mourning the loss of Saul, but be of good cheer with Saul's replacement.
- His name, David, arguably the polar opposite of Saul, for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his heart after God's own heart.
- One of the lessons I'm learning is that our mourning what's taken in the past; ends with the rejoicing in what God gives next in the present.

(2) And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it*, he will kill me." But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'" (3) Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."

- These two verses have been the subject of some debate amongst Bible commentators because it seems to imply that Samuel is told to lie.
- The difficulty is that we know God would never command us to sin in this way yet, he is told to only say he's coming to sacrifice to the Lord.
- In other words, the inference is Samuel is withholding his main reason for coming to the house of Jesse, which is to anoint the next king.

Adam Clarke offers us some insight into why this is not a lie when he writes, "This was strictly *true*; Samuel *did* offer a sacrifice; and it does not appear that he could have done the work which God designed, unless he had offered this sacrifice, and called the elders of the people together, and this collected Jesse's sons. But he did not tell the principle design of his coming; had he done so, it would have produced *evil* and *no good*."

- The truth of the matter is Saul would have killed Samuel had he found out that he was going to anoint the next King of Israel to replace him.
- We need look no further than to Saul's attempt for many years to kill David, who ironically is the next king of Israel that Samuel will anoint.
- Be that as it may, we are still presented with an unanswered question of when is it not a lie to knowingly withhold information from others.

- In order to answer this question we need to bring Rahab into the discussion by virtue of what she did for the spies back in Joshua 2:1-6.

Joshua 2:1-6 NKJV Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men from Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho." So they went, and came to the house of a harlot named Rahab, and lodged there. (2) And it was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country." (3) So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country." (4) Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from." (5) And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." (6) (But she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.)

- Here, it would appear as if God were condoning, or at the very least, excusing Rahab's lie, because it would spare the lives of the spies.
- However, upon further examination, one can see that God is in no way doing this, as there is no such thing as a justifiable or excusable lie.
- This because, Rahab was never specifically told what to say to the king of Jericho, whereas Samuel was as it relates to the king of Israel.

- In other words, Samuel did not lie, despite what God had told him, whereas Rahab did lie, chiefly because she, as of yet, isn't a unbeliever.
- In other words, she hasn't yet come to salvation or the subsequent work of sanctification. She's still a sinner, not to mention a prostitute.
- We do err when we expect the un-regenerated unbeliever to behave like a regenerated believer. Absent salvation there is no sanctification.

- Another reason Rahab lying doesn't condone or excuse lying, is because of the cultural practices of that day, which are similar in our day.
- The Middle-Eastern people are known for being one of the most, if not the most, hospitable and even loyal people in the world culturally.
- Here's why; the ancient Arab's particularly, were a nomadic people who in traveling great distances would be saved by other's hospitality.

- It's for this reason, to this day, if you break bread with an Arab, you're loyal to each other even to death. In effect, they owe you their lives.
- When you bring someone into your home, in the Middle East you are bound to protect their lives as if they were your own immediate family.
- For Rahab to protect these two men, she is not only saving their lives literally, she'll also soon be repaid with the saving of her life eternally.

- By way of explaining it and not excusing it, I suppose you could say that the cultural practices of the day superseded her lying in this case.
- Another reason this passage doesn't condone lying is just because God's Word records the lie, in no way means it's encouraging the lie.
- While the narrative gives us an account of what actually happened, the truth is that she didn't have to lie in order to save these two men.

- Rahab is doing the only thing she knows to do, however, God doesn't need us to lie for Him in order to protect ourselves and even others.

- Couple of thoughts before we close, I believe that we are never more like the Devil than when we are deceptive and given over to lying.
- We know from scripture in the words of Jesus Himself, the Devil is the "Father of Lies." When we lie, we are acting like a child of the Devil.
- You've heard the expression the apple doesn't fall too far from the tree, well, so too is this true for us when we to imitate the Father of Lies.

- The good news is lying, and the father of lying, cannot have the last word in our lives. Neither did it have the final word in the life of Rahab.
- This prostitute and liar was not only an example of faith in James, a hero of faith in Hebrews she's in the Jesus Christ's lineage in Matthew.
- How can this be? It's been said when God sees us, He sees not our sin, He sees only His Son. God doesn't see us as sinners but saints.

- Here's the conclusion of the matter, there does come a time like with Samuel that withholding specific information is prudent not deceptive.
- I'll take it a step further and suggest that the withholding of specific information under the banner of confidentiality can protect both parties.
- By that I mean, not only was God protecting Samuel from Saul by withholding specific information, God was also protecting Saul as well.